



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM  
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN  
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES  
LANSING



MARIANNE UDOW  
DIRECTOR

February 14, 2006

Nolan Finley, Editorial Page Editor  
The Detroit News  
615 W. Lafayette  
Detroit, MI 48226

Dear Mr. Finley,

Your article and headline on February 14 included unproven allegations regarding the Department of Human Services. It is entirely premature – and irresponsible - to draw conclusions about the Ricky Holland case, especially before the facts are known and a full investigation is completed.

When a child dies and the department has been involved in any way, we undertake a full review the case - every action taken and every decision made by the department - to determine if something more could have been done to avert a tragedy. We look not only at the individual actions, but at our overall practices to ensure that our system provides the best possible protections for children.

You portrayed the department as "unwilling" to release case details. In fact, the department is following state child protection laws as we are required to do even if releasing details would benefit the department.

We are committed to doing whatever needs to be done to keep children like Ricky safe - and we share that commitment with law enforcement, the courts, and other health and social services professionals, and of course, parents and citizens.

The death of Ricky Holland was a terrible tragedy. Like everyone, the child welfare community was shocked and saddened by his death, and our hearts go out to those who loved and cared for Ricky.

Sincerely,

Marianne Udow